

# Frequently Asked Questions: Moving to the MN.IT Cloud

April 28, 2014

The following FAQ for MN.IT employees focuses on the March 2014 update to the MN.IT Tactical Plan, originally published in October 2012.

There are three sections to the FAQ:

- Tactical Plan Update: Focus on Implementation
- Migrating to the MN.IT Cloud
- What Happens to Me?

## Tactical Plan Update: Focus on Implementation

### What is the Tactical Plan and why are we doing it?

The MN.IT Tactical Plan is our revolving two-year window on how to make IT services more efficient so that we can utilize our resources as effectively as possible for the business of the State. [The Tactical Plan](#) was first published in October 2012.

With this update, our strategy remains the same: ***Make the IT infrastructure super-efficient so we can focus our people, money and creativity on the services that most directly make a difference for our customers and citizens.***

Why is this important? Because government's dependence on IT to transact business and serve the citizens of the state grows every day. What we do – and how we do it – matters to the people of Minnesota. Agencies depend on MN.IT as they deliver everything from school records to business licenses, traffic management, and emergency health services. Improving our services and spending our resources wisely means we can be responsive to that growing need. Being able to provide creative and effective IT solutions make a difference in people's lives.

It's the right thing to do for the State of Minnesota.

And we are not alone. According to the Corporate Executive Board, 90% of all IT organizations have restructured since 2011 or plan to do so in the near future.

### Why update the plan?

The Tactical Plan, first published in October 2012, had a two-year window of activity to get us towards our ultimate goal of building enterprise services and making the State's IT operations more efficient. Although the end game remains the same, the new document updates the timelines and priorities for the next two years, based on our accomplishments and lessons learned since the plan came out.

While the update gives us a high-level roadmap and strategy for the next two years, each individual project will provide the project objectives and timelines in its specific artifacts.

### What, in a nutshell, does the update say? Is this "Tactical Plan 2.0"?

We considered calling the new document Version 2.0 but the goals and strategy have not changed. It is really just an update.

In some cases, the timing and the order of change are being tweaked based on a variety of factors, including agency complexity, the readiness of services to migrate, etc. Specifically, the update calls for active progress for the following enterprise services and leadership priorities:

- Active Directory
- Wide Area Network
- Identity Access Management
- Managed Hosting
- Mobile Device Management
- SharePoint
- Single Service Desk and Workstation Management
- Web Content Management
- Enterprise Architecture
- Financial Consolidation
- Geospatial Services
- Project and Portfolio Management and Standards
- Information Security Consolidation and Optimization

[See the update for details.](#)

The update outlines what we've accomplished to date and shows some adjustments to priorities and execution strategies based on what we've learned since the plan was first published.

The approach will be to implement enterprise services with a few agencies at a time rather than planning a "big bang" approach. The approach is faster and allows us to adjust as we gain experience. The process will be more iterative than previously anticipated.

#### **What has been accomplished since the plan was published 1 ½ years ago?**

We have a lot to celebrate. The first section of the Tactical Plan Update outlines all of the Tactical Plan projects that have been completed – 14 in all.

For each of the projects that are continuing, the Tactical Plan Update provides the current status and the goals for the remainder of FY14 and all of FY15. In most cases, the planning and service design work is complete and we are ready to implement.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without great teamwork from all across MN.IT. Congratulations to all who participated – that includes the work teams dedicated to the projects (*over 100 employees from across our agency served on at least one phase of the planning process*) as well as others that took up the slack left behind in the team members' divisions or agency-based offices. Thank you!

#### **Are the new services really ready for the scheduled workloads?**

The planning teams got us only part of the way toward actually building up the new service operations. The rest is up to all of us.

The purpose of adopting the gradual migration plan outlined in the update is to ensure that we build the MN.IT Cloud services and staff at a pace that can realistically be handled. This allows us to learn and adjust to meet the needs of our customers. *More importantly, it is designed to make sure our employees doing the work have input into how the services are operationalized to meet their customers' needs. We're all in this together.*

Those who move into new enterprise service teams will continue the good work they already do for customers. At the same time, they will help mature the new team's processes and operations to be ready for the next wave of migrations.

*The bottom line is this – we all have a shared responsibility to maintain and enhance the services to our customers, even as we internally move to the MN.IT Cloud. It takes every single one of us to make this a success!*

**Will there be a degradation of service to what my customers have come to expect?**

It is our good fortune to have very recent customer satisfaction data that shows that 97% of executive branch employees are “very satisfied,” “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with MN.IT’s services and people. This is extraordinary validation of the work our team does in all corners of the organization.

We’re counting on you to be sure that it stays that way. In fact, most of the changes in our organization should not be visible to the customer. Their service (and satisfaction) should continue uninterrupted.

**What is the relationship between this plan and the consolidation of security functions that was announced in January?**

The security consolidation is part of the overall Tactical Plan and is similar in nature and process to the other consolidations outlined in the update. The grouping of security staff into a single organizational structure allows us to better protect our collective systems and environment. The goal of these functional changes is to help the security professionals work as a team – sharing their very precious knowledge and expertise, and providing a “deeper bench” for critical security functions.

Security functions common to all agencies and systems will be delivered to all from a single team; those security functions that need to remain closer to business will be grouped into “lines-of-business” teams within that single reporting structure.

A more detailed [Security Optimization Plan](#) is available on the Commons. Detailed planning for the security organizational changes is currently underway.

**When do you expect that all the changes outlined in this update will be done?**

We expect that the full implementation of the MN.IT Cloud in all of its complexity will take several years. Ultimately, the pace will be driven by each project based on requirements, deliverables, dependencies and normal project process.

**You talk about this being done to make IT more efficient, but aren’t the changes going to cost a lot of money?**

To date, we have been able to accomplish all of the planning and administrative changes related to consolidation by revising budget priorities and with the help of one-time contributions from end-of-year (2013) agency IT budgets, as permitted by statute. Centralized service rates and agency-based overall IT budgets have not been impacted.

The next phase of implementation does require some further investment which we are, again, planning to manage through prioritization of resources. The limitations on available dollars for investment will certainly impact the order and speed in which we do things, but we believe that we have options that will keep us moving forward. We have every confidence that the implementation of the Tactical Plan will result both in better service and will keep down the cost of IT over time.

## **Migrating to the MN.IT Cloud**

**What do you mean by “migration?” Does it involve a change of roles and responsibilities, people, and/or physical location?**

In most cases, the first change will be a change in reporting. If your function is consolidated into a single team, you will begin reporting within that team prior to the onset of your agency’s workload “migration.” In most cases, you will continue to do the same job in the same place, just working within an enterprise strategy and processes. At that point, you will be part of the team that plans and executes the migration of others. Your expertise will be vital to ensure that there is no degradation of service.

As the team gets solidified and as workloads become more integrated, the organizational structure of the team will mature and you may experience new opportunities to specialize on a particular skillset or take on new roles. At some point, if appropriate, you may also change locations – not necessarily to the central location, but perhaps assigned to another group or sub-team where your skills will be applied.

**What migrations will happen first?**

Our core strategy for migrating operations functions from agencies to an enterprise service is to begin with those agencies that have less financial and operational complexity. We will work our way methodically toward full integration, benefiting from experience and lessons along the way.

Each enterprise service will have its individual game plan. In consultation with agency-based CIOs, each project owner will draw up a six-month schedule for migration so agency-based offices know what to expect and can begin planning. This should happen in the next few weeks.

**How do you decide which agencies go first?**

The order of agency and service moves within each six-month framework is determined in consultation with agency-based CIOs based on many factors. The work needs to be paced to ensure success. We want to be sure we are aggressive but realistic about what can be done, keeping in mind that our primary business is serving our customers. In the short term, customers benefit from continued service. In the long run, they benefit from the operational improvements our efforts will bring. Both are important. It's not an easy task but well worth the effort.

**How will we know when our agency or service is being migrated?**

The order and timeline are currently under discussion and will be included in the documentation for each project. In order to give us flexibility to react to changes and/or synergistic opportunities, active planning will focus on six months at a time.

Your CIO/division executive will talk to you when the changes will affect your agency-based office. Only those agency-based offices impacted in the current cycle will have concrete dates and plans for the changes.

**When will changes begin to the security team structure?**

There's a lot of analysis and planning to be done in order to implement the security consolidation. We don't expect that the line-of-business teams called for in the plan will be fully formed for several months.

**Who will do my work at the agency-based office when I transfer into the new team?**

The function(s) you currently perform will come with you and, in most cases, you'll keep right on doing it. The specialization within the new team will occur over time and with the benefit of input from those that manage and work in the new environment. If you perform a little bit of many functions where you are now, it will be worked out in advance with your agency-based CIO as to what role you will continue to do in your new team, and what will be handled by others, and hand-offs will be managed accordingly.

**Are we going to be expected to learn new processes and use new tools overnight?**

The reason we're focusing first on a change in the reporting structure for consolidated functions is because the standardization of processes and tools take time. So does the integration of people into specialized role.

In most cases, at least initially, you will continue to provide the services and perform the functions as you currently do, but you will also be working to shape the future. Over time, your team will begin to reinvent itself to share responsibilities, processes and tools in a more integrated fashion. It will not happen overnight.

This is a long journey. In the end, our organization will be stronger, every service will have a broader and deeper "bench," and we'll have the ability to provide more agile, higher quality services to our customers.

**The Tactical Plan talks about teams being formed to work on migrations. Are these permanent or temporary teams?**

It depends on the service. In most cases, the migration process is pretty simple. Folks will continue doing what they're doing, but will report to a new team structure.

For managed hosting, the effort to integrate teams is a bit more complex because there are physical and equipment moves involved. These moves will be treated as projects and will have project managers coordinating the work.

Overall, the Tactical Plan will continue to have a steering team, project owners, a program manager, project managers, technical leads, etc., to coordinate the work and keep people informed. [You can follow the projects on the Commons.](#)

**If the people and/or responsibilities for certain infrastructure services report elsewhere, what does our agency-based office become?**

Our goal, as articulated in the Tactical Plan is to *make the IT infrastructure super-efficient so we can focus our people, money and creativity on the services that most directly make a difference for our customers and citizens.* That means that once these changes take place, agency-based offices will be able to turn their attention to two high-value areas for the organization and for their customers:

- Unique business application lifecycle management – from development to retirement. MN.IT, collectively, manages over 2,000 applications, most of them unique to individual agencies or a sub-set of agencies.
- Business relationship management and service management – i.e., understanding the business needs of the customer and ensuring that MN.IT delivers services to meet those needs.

In the new world, the agency-based offices will be the front line for agency customers – making sure that all of our services meet the goals and objectives of the programs that serve Minnesota.

**How many jobs/people will be affected by the consolidation goals outlined in the Tactical Plan?**

*We will all be affected because whether we join a new team or stay where we are, IT will be delivered differently to our customers than it has in the past and our roles and challenges will shift.*

We expect that approximately 50% of the organization will eventually experience some kind of reporting, responsibilities or physical shift.

The number of folks affected in the first six-month schedule is small, approximately 100 people out of 2000+.

**How will this activity affect our customers and their priorities? Will services cost more?**

The changes in the Tactical Plan are internal. They affect “how” we provide services and should remain transparent to our customers.

Our customers are most concerned with “what” services we provide, what services cost and whether we do them well. That doesn't change. Service delivery metrics and costs should remain neutral except in cases where an agency has traditionally underspent in a particular area or where an agency significantly increases its volume and/or requires new projects and services. All of these aspects of service delivery are covered in the Service Level Agreements that we keep up-to-date for each customer.

*The bottom line is this: our mission and daily objective is to provide IT to the State. Our long-term strategy is to improve our services and mitigate rising costs. The efforts we make to accomplish the latter strategy should be happening “behind the curtain” as far as our customers are concerned. It's all of our jobs to make sure that happens.*

### **What do you mean by financial consolidation?**

Financial consolidation means that MN.IT will control and manage the full IT budget for the State and will pay all of its own bills. In turn, our services will be billed to customers via a chargeback based on their consumption. The chargeback applies to all of our services, both centrally provided and locally provided.

As certain functions change from agency-based to enterprise, there will be a shift in where the dollars move within the agency, *but not a change to the overall IT budget for MN.IT.*

### **Will there ever be a day when we all work in the same building?**

Although the current distribution of staff will change over time as functions are consolidated, there will always be good reasons why certain functions stay close to business, even with the virtual management capabilities available today. It is, therefore, highly unlikely that there will come a day when all MN.IT employees can be found working in the same building (and there's no current state facility that could house 2,000 people). Nevertheless, space planning has to be part of this planning effort going on. We need to think about the future, and where we all can best do our jobs.

## **What Happens to Me?**

### **What, exactly, will happen to me when my function moves from an agency-based function to a consolidated function?**

Employees will move to the enterprise teams along with the work they have been doing at the agency-based office. A reporting change will come first and, depending on the service, staff will either stay where they are or they will eventually physically move into a new team location.

As workloads shift into the new service and more agency-based staff join the new team, roles and responsibilities may become more specialized. If additional training is needed to help employees perform a new, more specialized role, it will be provided.

### **Are we going to standardize classifications and compensation levels?**

The inconsistencies in classifications across MN.IT's agency-based offices have arisen over many years of individual agency hiring practices and processes and far pre-date the consolidation of IT and the 2012 creation of a central HR office for our agency. These inconsistencies cut both ways – in some cases, the classification levels assigned were more generous relative to comparable positions, and in others, they were more conservative. It is neither feasible nor realistic to fix these inconsistencies overnight for current staff.

In addressing this challenge, our first priority is to establish clear, consistent and standardized classification levels for each of the variety of primary IT functions. This is important because it establishes a concrete baseline, and it will prevent further inconsistencies and inequities from happening. Establishing these new standards will take time. We know it may be frustrating to individuals, but in the end, it will be faster and more fair to everyone.

We have begun with standards in those areas that have traditionally been outside of the IT classes but are performing IT work. To date, new classification standards – otherwise known as class options – have been created for Project Management (PM) and Business Analysis (BA). These new options have been assigned to various ITS classification levels. Each class/class option defines the knowledge, skills, responsibilities and education/certification requirements for PM and BA work in the ITS series. More information about these classification standards is available on the [HR section](#) of the Commons.

Going forward, we will move the appropriate MN.IT staff into the completed classes at the same time, and will then begin to develop the standards for the next function. It will take time to get it all done, but individual functions will see progress along the way.

**Will this standardization work be completed before employees move into new service teams?**

Not all of the work will be done. Our first priority is to address those that should be in IT-classes but currently are not.

As new service teams are solidified and workloads become more integrated, the organizational structure of the team will mature and, as IT classes become standardized, the appropriate staff will be placed into the corresponding classification.

**Will the new classifications standards be used for new positions or filling positions that are vacant?**

As standards are created (right now BA and PM positions), and as current MN.IT staff are moved into the appropriate new class/class options, the new standards will also be used for approved, vacant positions. That means that the new/vacant position's role, duties, certification and experience requirements must align with the new standards set forth in the job classification standards. HR is working with hiring managers and supervisors to implement these standards on a consistent basis.

**What are some of the other classification standards that HR will be working on?**

Some of the functions in HR's pipeline include server support, networking/telecommunications, workstation services and technical support, help desk, applications development, data/database administration, and quality assurance, to name a few.

We will continue to post new standards on the [HR section of the Commons](#) as they are created and will announce these new standards to staff.

**Will there still be job opportunities for me in the enterprise organization if my agency-based office is one of the last to be migrated?**

If you are performing a function at MN.IT now, there will be work for you to do in the future, regardless of when you are integrated into an enterprise team. Basically, as your workload shifts to the new team, you will go with it.

**Will I have a chance to take on new responsibilities during all this change?**

It is possible that, as the teams integrate, we will see increased specialization within team roles over time. Where needed, training will be available for necessary specialization skills and/or for an assignment to a new function.

**What about career paths for managers? Will there be fewer managers in the new MN.IT Cloud organization than there are in the federated environment?**

Our existing management pool is going to be vital to our long-term maturity and success as an IT service provider. Those directly affected by these changes will have two opportunities to grow their careers in the new organizational structure:

- *Working within the consolidated services:* As the size and scope of enterprise services grow, there will be new management, supervisory and professional-level positions needed. Some of these positions do not currently exist in agency-based offices because the single-agency environment is neither as large nor as complex as the MN.IT Cloud organization will become.
- *Taking on opportunities in new focus areas for the organization:* The great advantage to consolidating our common services is that we can focus our resources on new activity, functions and services that none of us have historically had time to do. We anticipate that there will be exciting new opportunities for managers to help us advance our collective capabilities in growth areas for the organization.

**Will there be advancement opportunities for non-managers and supervisors to get into management positions?**

There have been and continue to be scores of new employment opportunities available in MN.IT. As of April 25, 2014, there were 21 MN.IT job postings on the [State's Careers website](#). New opportunities are expected to continue as retirements and separations occur, and as MN.IT begins to focus on new activities, functions and services that none of us have historically had time to do.

**What happens if my function is consolidated but I remain “out in the field”? To whom do I report – the enterprise organization or my agency-based CIO?**

Regardless of your location, you will be part of a single team, reporting directly into the new enterprise management structure for all work assignments and performance. In some cases, you will continue to serve the same customer, in other cases you may be asked to serve multiple customers on a work team. If you are located at an agency-based office, you will have a matrixed relationship to the agency-based CIO in the office where you sit. However, you will perform your function within the enterprise team as assigned.

Regardless of location, all of our work will be prioritized by the needs of the customer as documented in SLAs.

**If my function is moving to the new team within the next six months, should I stop working on the projects/assignments I currently have?**

No. Until your function is moved, you keep right on serving the needs of your customer and you'll work under the same management and direction as always. Nothing should stop. Even after the reporting change occurs, you'll keep on doing the same/substantially similar job under new management. Gradually, your role may change, but will be done in a way that takes care of the customer's needs and priorities.

**This plan calls for the gradual build-up of enterprise teams as each agency moves workloads to the MN.IT Cloud. Are there some teams that will be formed whole from the start?**

Yes, if the number of people across all of MN.IT performing a particular function is small, it makes sense to move them all into a new reporting structure at once, rather than building them up slowly over time. This will allow them to work together on creating/refining the new service from the start with enough bandwidth to do a good job.

Some of the early teams to be formed from across all of MN.IT include:

- *Security professionals* – MN.IT's security professionals will be combined into a single reporting structure and divided among six agency lines-of-business to better manage available resources against priority functions.
- *Mobile Device Management* – MN.IT will create a single operations team for Mobile Device Management.
- *SharePoint* – A matrix organization of SharePoint specialists is being formed to better support the migration to and operation of a single SharePoint service.
- *Identity Access Management* - An IAM team is being created with staff from MN.IT @ DHS, DPS and Central who are experts in this area. They will work as a single matrixed operational team.

**How do I get a chance for training in the MN.IT U?**

MN.IT “U” is the name we adopted for a training program for MN.IT Cloud staff during transition.

As workloads move, training will be an option for helping individuals prepare for changes in their roles or in training for roles in another service area that needs additional talent. Training opportunities will focus on the needs of the enterprise service delivery organization and will be approved and arranged by the management of the new enterprise organization and HR.

**What happens if I am currently a “generalist,” with a variety of roles? How will it be decided where I will fit in? What if, as a generalist, I don’t have the skills for fulltime specialization in one area or don’t have the base requirements for the new standard classes?**

You will have a role in the new enterprise service delivery functions based on your skills. We know that there are currently a lot of staff – particularly in smaller agency-based offices – that do a little of everything or a lot of a few things. In the future organization, you may be assigned to more specialized work in a single function based on the organization’s needs and on your skills. Where there needs to be supplemental training, it will be provided.

**If my reporting changes, will my @ Agency designation change, too?**

As you join an enterprise team, your signature and designation will change to reflect the overall team you’re on.

In fact, it’s probably time to revisit the whole naming convention for MN.IT staff. While the @ Agency designation has served us well for the first two years of consolidation to identify who and where we are, the lines between working teams and physical locations will continue to get more blurry as consolidation continues. We will be looking at alternatives that can reflect the new reality and give folks a sense of identity going forward. Stay tuned.

**Will all of the changes eventually include physical relocation? And if so, where and when will we be moving?**

Some changes will include physical moves because it makes sense for teams to work in close proximity. Others will not (i.e., the reporting and management structure will change, but you will continue to work close to the business – sometimes at the very same desk you work at now).

Our ability to house all of the teams together that need to work closely together will be tricky in the spaces we all currently occupy. Space planning has begun and will be a factor in determining the order of migrations over the next two years.

**I work at my agency-based office because I believe in the mission of the agency I serve. How do I maintain the knowledge and identity that I have developed?**

Regardless of the team you join and regardless of whether there is a physical move involved, you will continue to serve the mission of the agency you love either directly or indirectly. In fact, your knowledge of and passion for the agency’s business makes you a valuable member of your new team. You may, however, get the additional chance to share your skills and expertise with more than one agency. And, regardless of where we work and what we do, we all have the privilege of facilitating good government for the people of Minnesota.

**Are you going to offer early retirement options or other incentives as part of this transition?**

There are no current plans for such options because we need everyone to keep working! There’s a lot to do. In fact, HR has a recruitment specialist to be sure that we’re getting great staff onboard to fill vacancies quickly to tackle all of the work that needs to be done.

**Will the new enterprise services employ fewer people than are currently performing those functions now?**

The purpose is to help us work smarter and provide better, more agile and innovative service to our customers. The strategy for the Tactical Plan is this: ***Make the IT infrastructure super-efficient so we can focus our people, money and creativity on the services that most directly make a difference for our customers and citizens.***

Having said that, we do not anticipate that every enterprise service will have the same number of employees at the end of consolidation as they did at the beginning. Some will be the same in size, some will be smaller and some will grow as the service expands. We expect attrition and reassignments to get us to where we need to be over time.

**Are you saying that no MN.IT employees will lose their jobs through the initiatives in this plan?**

Layoffs are not part of the Tactical Plan strategy. We cannot guarantee it, but that is our goal. No organization can ever promise that all employees are guaranteed a job no matter what happens, and we can't make that promise now. A number of factors are always in play in any organization, and most have nothing to do with consolidation. Some of the challenges we face include the overall state budget, the strategic discontinuation of technologies that no longer serve a business need, new business requirements and changes to program activity, and so on.

**Is this consolidation a first step toward outsourcing everything?**

There is no pre-set expectation or goal. Wholesale outsourcing of IT has proven problematic and costly for companies and states that have gone that route. Our only goal is to become more efficient, and we will continue to put our energy toward making MN.IT Services a high-value, competitive service provider to the State of Minnesota.

We will, however, continue to partner with the private sector – as we have done for many years - for the delivery of certain commodity services such as telecommunications, network, etc., or specialized services when there's a good business case. Doing so helps us utilize our internal staff for higher value work.

The current delivery of EUCC is a good example – we found a cloud solution that was extremely cost-effective, more secure, and delivered feature enhancements. Most importantly, staff that used to manage servers and troubleshoot issues with email availability are now available for other work related to improving the service and helping our business partners make use of the product.

**More Questions?**

You can get more information by reading the Tactical Plan update and by following the project reports. Just click on the “Tactical Plan” button on [the Commons home page](#).

If you have questions, contact the Communications Group at [MN.IT\\_Comm@state.mn.us](mailto:MN.IT_Comm@state.mn.us).